

Hypothermia Mortality in Missouri 1984–94

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Hypothermia became reportable by law in Missouri effective April 8, 1993. Hypothermia is defined as a physician-diagnosed case of cold injury associated with a fall of body temperature to less than 94.1°F and resulting from unintentional exposure to a cold environment.

In the past ten winters, 141 Missourians have died of conditions related to excessive cold. The most severe winters were 1984–85 when 25 deaths occurred and 1989–90 when 20 deaths occurred. See Figure 1. Of the total 141 deaths, 51 percent occurred in persons over age 65. See Table 1. The rate of mortality increased sharply at older ages as seen in Figure 2. This emphasizes the need to be very supportive of persons at highest risk and especially so with increasing age.

Table 1. Hypothermia Deaths and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group, Missouri, 1984-85 to 1993-94.

Age Group	Frequency	Rate
0–4	1	.26
5–14	1	.13
15–24	4	.55
25–34	12	1.40
35–44	13	1.77
45–54	15	2.87
55–64	22	4.81
65–74	22	5.59
75–84	28	11.56
85+	22	27.50
Unknown	1	

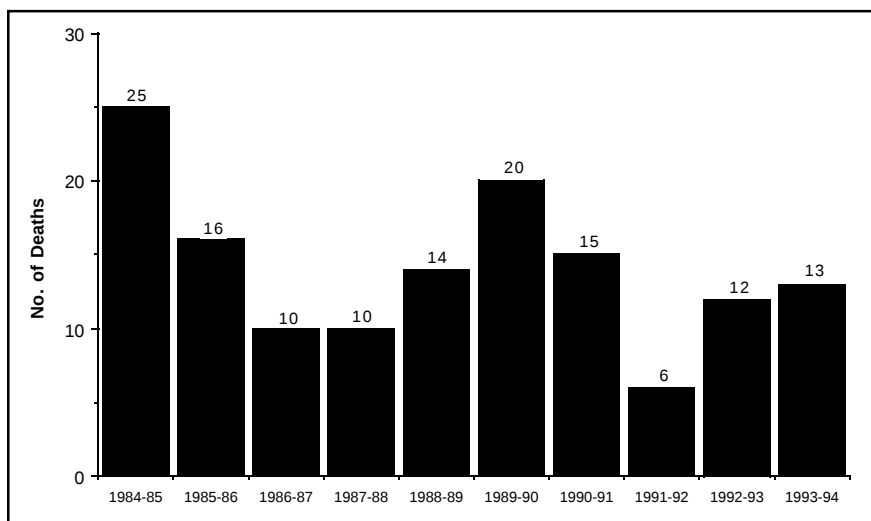


Figure 1. Hypothermia deaths, Missouri, 1984-85 to 1993-94.

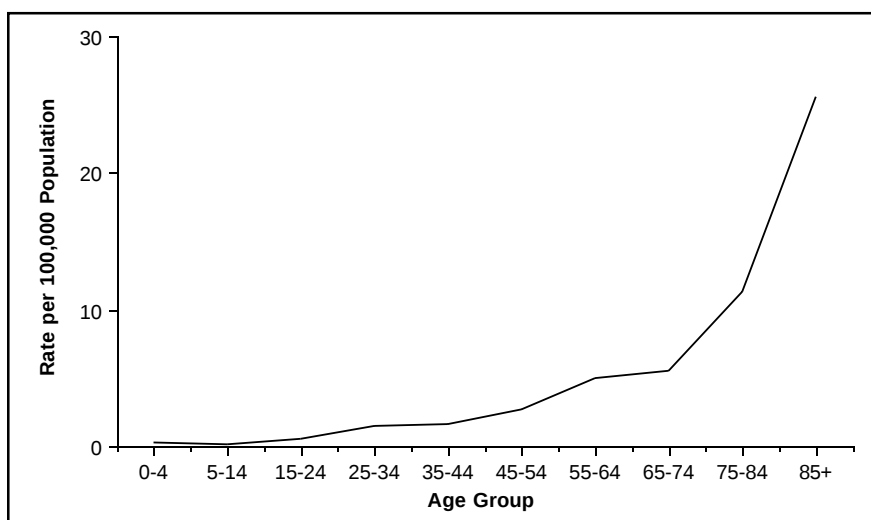


Figure 2. Hypothermia death rates per 1,000,000 population by age group, Missouri, 1984-85 to 1993-94.